

Lafayette

Downtown Action Agenda Update 2007

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Making Downtown Renaissance A Reality

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October 3, 2007

The Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation
The Downtown Development Council
The Lafayette Redevelopment Commission
The City of Lafayette

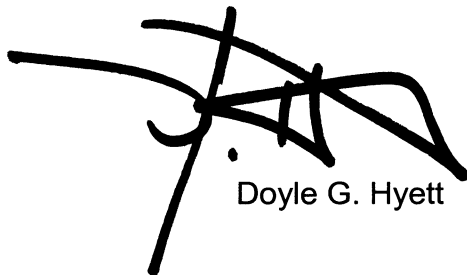
RE: ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda Update 2007***

HyettPalma, Inc., is pleased to present to you the following report titled ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda Update 2007***.

This document is the result of a process undertaken to revisit, reconnect, refocus, and recharge Lafayette's Downtown enhancement – based on the document titled ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda 2002*** which was completed by HyettPalma as part of *Indiana Downtown®*, a technical assistance program offered by the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns.

We thank you for the opportunity to work once again with the Lafayette community and to be a part of your continuing efforts to strengthen Downtown Lafayette. We hope you will keep us informed of your success and know that – as always – we stand ready to assist in any way we can as you proceed with Lafayette's Downtown enhancement effort.

Sincerely,



Doyle G. Hyett



Dolores P. Palma

Acknowledgements

HyettPalma would like to thank the members of the Downtown Development Council, the Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation, and the Lafayette Redevelopment Commission – listed below – for their support and participation in completing the ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda Update 2007***.

The ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda Update 2007*** was funded by the Lafayette Redevelopment Commission through the use of Consolidated Central Tax Increment Financing District funds.

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Project Overview

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

This document presents the findings and recommendations that resulted from revisiting Downtown Lafayette and the **Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda 2002**, which was completed by HyettPalma as part of the *Indiana Downtown®* technical assistance program offered by the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns.

The purpose of revisiting Downtown and the **Downtown Action Agenda** was to:

- Review progress and identify gaps that have occurred as the **Downtown Action Agenda** was implemented over the last five years;
- Reconnect with the community to gauge local opinion about the Downtown enhancement effort to date, as well as to define the community's concerns and aspirations for Downtown's future;
- Refocus, as necessary, the direction that needs to be taken by the Downtown Development Council over the next five-years – in partnership with the efforts of the Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation, the Lafayette Redevelopment Commission, City of Lafayette, and others;
- Recharge the Downtown enhancement effort and all those involved in that effort; and
- Recommend actions that should be taken over the next five-years to move Downtown Lafayette forward in attaining the community's defined vision for Downtown and the economic potentials facing Downtown.

A map of the Downtown project area, which was the focus of this update, is shown on the following page of this document.

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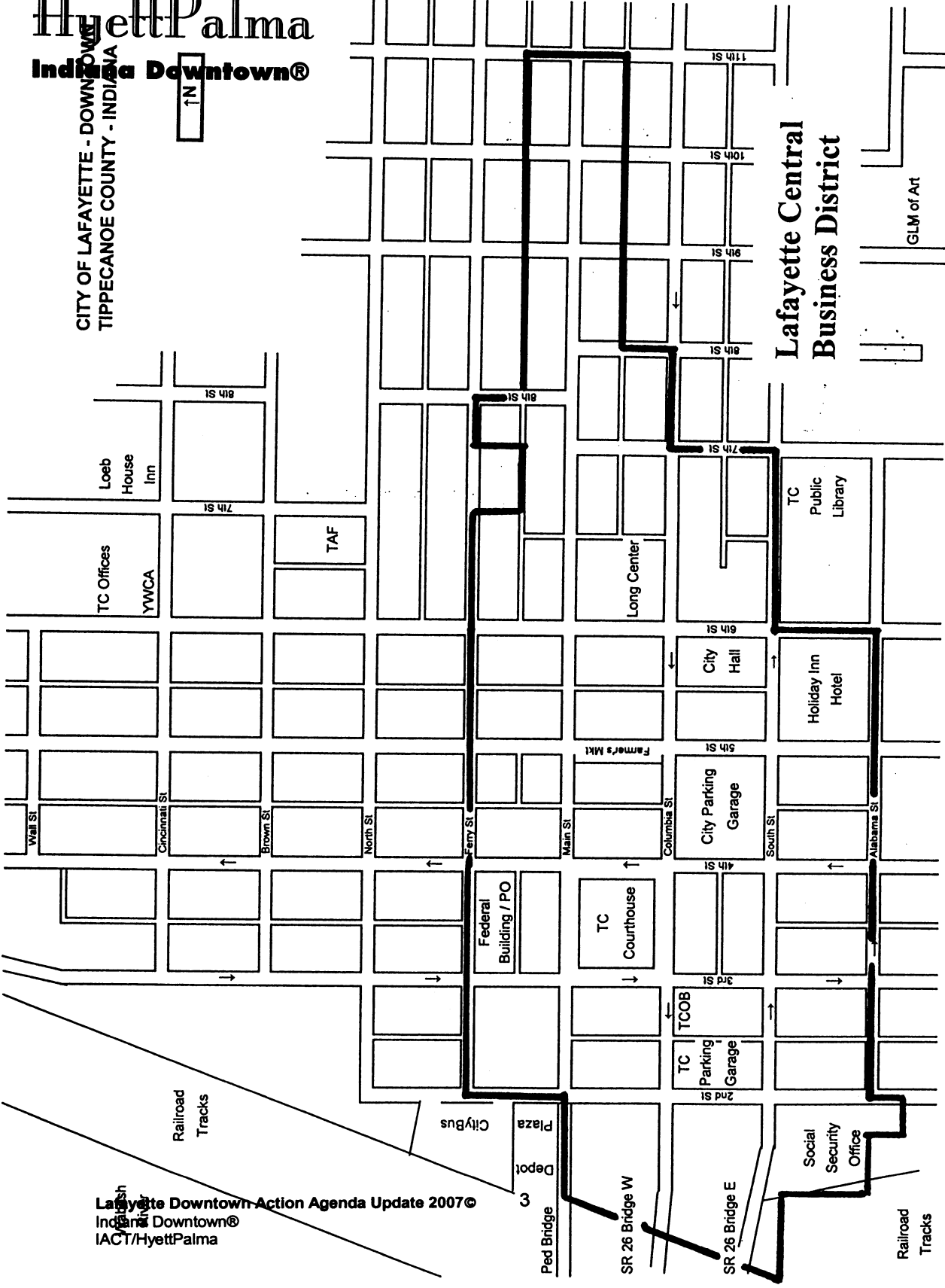
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CITY OF LAFAYETTE - DOWNTOWN
TIPPECANOE COUNTY - INDIANA

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Lafayette Central Business District

GLM of Art



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Downtown Overview

II. DOWNTOWN OVERVIEW

Tremendous strides have been made and accomplishments realized in Downtown Lafayette over the last five years, since completion of the ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda 2002***.

When asked what they thought were the greatest accomplishments realized in Downtown over the last five years, community members who participated in sessions held to update the ***Downtown Action Agenda*** most often cited the following.

- Today, Downtown Lafayette has a very positive image. This is evidenced by the fact that it is described locally as being “vibrant and alive” and “fun at night,” with “the best restaurants and most unique shops in the area.”
- The City has expanded the boundaries of the Riverfront District, with the result being there are now twelve restaurants located in the district and applications pending for three more.
- There are many more residential units in Downtown today than there were in 2001, with approximately 150 condos and 600 total units. And, over the last five years, the trend has been for the creation of an increasing number of owner-occupied housing units in Downtown, as opposed to rental units. This demonstrates the strength of Downtown’s housing market.
- Notable condo conversions and new construction include the Ball Building, Cracker Factory, Shultz-Walgamuth Building, Madison Building, and Renaissance Place.
- Renaissance Place is completed, creating a strong anchor on the west side of Downtown. And, it is said locally that, other than Indianapolis, Lafayette is the only community in Indiana to have added an office building of this size to its Downtown in the last ten years.
- The Holiday Inn has been completed and opened, creating a new anchor and activity generator in Downtown.

- Downtown's vacancy rate has been decreased and is now, by local accounts, less than 10%.
- The number of parking spaces in Downtown has increased over the last five years. And, the City has gone to a more effective method of enforcing parking time limits, by using hand-held computers.
- The Lafayette Theater has been restored and opened, being available for rentals as well as showing classic movies one night a week. And, the Long Center is reported to be doing very well.
- Additional events have been created in Downtown, such as the Gallery Walks, which are highly successful in attracting people to Downtown.
- The Downtown farmers market has been enhanced, with more events and activities that enable the market to attract larger numbers of patrons.
- The City of Lafayette has completed a "model block" of new streetscape improvements in Downtown – and intends to replicate these improvements on blocks around the Courthouse Square and on Main Street.
- The Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation has been formed – by consolidating six organizations that were in place at the time the ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda 2002*** was created – and has hired a CEO.
- Under the umbrella of the Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation, the Downtown Development Council was formed and staffed to focus on Downtown's continued enhancement.
- The Wabash River Enhancement Corporation was formed, hired a CEO, and is about to have a strategic plan defined for the riverfront. And, it is understood that this plan will focus on the "urban areas" along the river – meaning Downtown Lafayette and West Lafayette.
- The Uptown Merchants Association was formed and – it is agreed locally –

has increased camaraderie among Downtown shop owners.

- The neighborhood associations adjacent to Downtown have gained in strength over the last five years, consider themselves to be a part of Downtown, and want to be included in the Downtown enhancement effort.
- It is generally agreed that there is a “spirit of optimism” in the community – thanks to the creation of many new jobs in Lafayette over the last five years and the improvements made in Downtown Lafayette.
- Community members appear to be in agreement that “we’ve done a heck of a job” in Downtown, but that “we want to continue” and “make Downtown even better.”

Desires

Those participating in sessions held to update the ***Downtown Action Agenda*** most often expressed a desire to see the enhancement effort result in the following, over the next five years:

- A more vibrant “scene” of culture, art, entertainment, and nightlife in Downtown;
- More restaurants;
- More specialty retail businesses – and a more varied mix of such businesses;
- An increased number and diversity of people working, living, shopping, dining, and playing in Downtown; and
- Strong adjacent neighborhood associations that are involved in the Downtown effort.

Concerns

When asked to cite the major concerns facing Downtown, those participating in sessions held to define the ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda Update 2007*** most frequently and repeatedly mentioned the following:

- The marketing of Downtown;
- Improving Downtown's business mix;
- Amplifying Downtown's ambience by ensuring that it is clean, safe, and pedestrian-friendly; and
- Social issues, which many community members say are increasing in Downtown.

It must be noted that, when the ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda 2002*** was being defined, parking was a major issue that was raised repeatedly by community members. As the update process unfolded, this issue was seldom mentioned.

It should also be noted that social issues (i.e., the number, concentration, and expansion of social service facilities in and adjacent to Downtown) was repeatedly mentioned as an issue of great concern during the update process. When the original ***Downtown Action Agenda*** was being defined, this issue was not raised at all.

Guidelines

Based on a review of progress made over the last five years in implementing the original ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda 2002***, and on the results of the process conducted to update that ***Downtown Action Agenda***, HyettPalma recommends the following guidelines be embraced by those working to bring about the next phase of Downtown's enhancement.

1. As Downtown Goes, So Goes the Town

There is a truism in the business of Downtown enhancement, which holds that "As Downtown goes, so goes the town." This is true since an economically healthy and sustainable Downtown creates a vibrant image for the city in which it is located, which in turn enables that city to attract jobs, professionals (such as doctors and teachers), and additional residents – thereby enhancing the quality-of-life enjoyed by all residents of that city. And, the opposite is also true . . . an ailing Downtown casts a negative image, dragging down the entire city and the quality-of-life that city can offer its residents.

With Lafayette being the seat of Tippecanoe County, the impact of this truism – and of Downtown's importance – is even greater, since in this case the following is true:

***As Downtown Lafayette goes,
So goes the county.***

Therefore, the public and private sector leaders of Lafayette and Tippecanoe County must continue to place an emphasis on continually strengthening the economy and image of Downtown Lafayette.

2. Rents

Some locally have wondered if commercial rents in Downtown are “too high,” meaning not affordable for small, independent shop owners. In response, it should be noted that Downtown commercial rents are generally lower than rents being asked (and paid) in other commercial areas located elsewhere in the Lafayette-West Lafayette area. Second, whether rents are considered to be “high” or “reasonable” is simply a matter of their affordability given a business's revenue stream. This means that a given amount of rent would be considered “reasonable” if a business is sufficiently profitable and “high” if that same business were not. Therefore, the enhancement strategy recommended in this document should be used to increase business profitability in Downtown by:

- Increasing the number of customers coming to Downtown through better marketing;
- Working one-on-one with current shop owners to encourage any needed improvements that would increase their draw; and
- Actively recruiting businesses of the types recommended in the 2007 market analysis being conducted for the enterprise zone, so that Downtown becomes more of a destination for shoppers.

3. Sprawl

There is some concern locally about Downtown's ability to thrive in the face of myriad commercial developments sprouting up in Lafayette and West Lafayette. It must be realized that the only way Downtowns have found to successfully co-exist

with nearby large national chains and franchises it to be different from them. This means:

- Downtown must have a clear niche – such as the arts, entertainment, food, and specialty retail niche being created in Downtown Lafayette – and aggressively market that niche;
- Downtown must provide the buying public an alternative to the new commercial venues by offering an “experience” that can not be found elsewhere; and
- The enhancement effort must be used to keep Downtown highly quaint, pedestrian-oriented, and specialized.

4. Stroll

There is a desire locally to have the buying public come to Downtown, park their vehicles, and stroll the length of Downtown – from the river to the shops on upper Main. This can only be accomplished by:

- Creating a contiguous band of first floor specialty food, art, entertainment, and retail businesses along Main;
- Implementing the traffic-calming recommendations contained in this document – to make Downtown as pedestrian-friendly as possible; and
- Ensuring that uses located along the riverfront, when developed, do not compete with those in the remainder of Downtown.

5. Adjacent Neighborhoods

It should be recognized that a stronger Downtown benefits the neighborhoods located adjacent to it, and vice versa. Therefore, efforts should be continued to:

- Enhance and improve the neighborhoods and housing surrounding Downtown Lafayette;
- Not allow commercial encroachment into those neighborhoods; and

- Increase communication between Downtown and those living in neighborhoods surrounding Downtown.

6. Partnership

It is a fact that Downtown Lafayette can only be further enhanced through a strong partnership of the private and public sectors. This is true since there are improvements that can only be made by the government and there are those that can only be made by Downtown business and property owners. Therefore, for continued success, the City of Lafayette should continue to support Downtown (with funding, staff, and services) and Downtown's business and property owners must take full responsibility for keeping their facilities in top-notch condition – which includes contributing to streetscape improvements.

7. Focus

As was said earlier, Downtown Lafayette has seen great strides over the last five years in the areas of building rehab and housing creation. Over the next five years, the priority of the Downtown enhancement effort should be:

- Better marketing of Downtown and its offerings;
- Aggressive recruitment of targeted business types;
- Continued public improvements; and
- Focusing on making the Retail, Arts & Entertainment District a greater draw.

Downtown Lafayette Tomorrow

III. DOWNTOWN LAFAYETTE TOMORROW

A variety of sessions were held to define the community's preferred vision for Downtown Lafayette – as it would exist in the year 2012. A compilation of the thoughts and preferences expressed during those sessions is shown below. The following was written by Laura Gibbons, Government Affairs Manager of the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns.

By the year 2012, Downtown Lafayette would be an energetic and bustling center of activity that makes Downtown a coveted place to live, work, play and visit. It would be densely populated with mom and pop specialty shops and restaurants that offer their own unique personality and offerings – no shop or restaurant located elsewhere would create the same experience.

Downtown would be beautiful, convenient and safe. Patrons would enjoy the pedestrian-friendly atmosphere and the historic, small town feeling. The streetscape would be inviting, cohesive and bright, expanding the streetscape design and adding creative banners, flowers, historic lighting and tree lights to illuminate Downtown year-round. Downtown businesses would also light up Downtown by staying open after 5 PM, on weekends, and during Downtown events and festivals.

Downtown would be clean, green, and have an enhanced riverfront linked to the core of Downtown. There would be plenty of outdoor seating in public areas and for dining outside. Public art would be a new Downtown fixture and would exemplify Downtown's thriving arts and culture scene that features theaters, galleries, museums, and gallery walks. Downtown architecture would also be preserved as historically important and as a key component of the arts and culture movement.

Downtown Lafayette would be alive and inviting. Nightlife would be exhilarating and enchanting every night – not just the traditional Thursday through Saturday evenings.

Staple events and festivals would continue to add to the spirit of Downtown along with the growing farmers market that attracts all ages and promotes local businesses and vendors. Downtown would serve as a place for families to spend their free time and would satisfy the entire family's thirst for fun.

To spread the word about Downtown Lafayette, its story would be widely marketed to residents and visitors so that, “they know we are here.” Downtown businesses would continue to coalesce and be part of the overall creative marketing campaign to highlight the best of Downtown’s Retail, Arts & Entertainment District. The message would let everyone know that, “Downtown is the place to be and that things are always happening here.”

In addition, wayfinding signs would be in place to direct people to Downtown, its attractions and its parking spaces. Visitors would be welcomed as they enter Downtown by alluring entryways and beautiful neighborhoods that proudly say, “you have now arrived.” And the trolley would be ringing its bell and offer another way to see and get around Downtown.

By 2012, the cooperation and dedication of the City, the Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation, the Downtown Development Council, business and property owners, residents, and organizations devoted to Downtown, would continue to attract more people to live in its urban lofts, apartments, and condos; to own a business or work in the thriving Downtown, and to play year-round with exciting nightlife, events, and weekend activities available for the whole family.

Downtown Lafayette would be an exciting destination and a visitor favorite as Downtown becomes known for the following image.

***A historic and thriving Downtown that hosts the
best restaurants, shops, and entertainment around
and you can walk to them all.***

***An energetic and spirit-filled Downtown that is
rich in history, art, and culture
creating a cosmopolitan feel nicely tucked into
a small town atmosphere.***

***An active and fun Downtown that is
energy-filled with lots of people
living, working, and strolling Downtown
in a welcoming and friendly environment.***

*A Downtown that is
clean, safe, and pedestrian-oriented, boasting
beautiful architecture, streetscapes, and a riverfront
to enjoy every step along the way.*

*A Downtown that is so
vibrant and charming that it makes
you fall in love with it and
possibly never leave.*

*Downtown Lafayette
– it's no longer a secret –
you can have it all in one special Downtown!*

Course of Action

IV. COURSE OF ACTION

It is recommended that the following Course of Action be implemented over the next five years in order to move Downtown on to the next level of economic health and prosperity.

Physical Improvements

The following physical improvements should be made to further reinforce and enhance Downtown's historic, quaint ambience.

1. Lighting

Currently, the City is exploring decorative, historic, pedestrian-scale streetlight standards along Main Street. This is a very important initiative, since it will improve the pedestrian experience along Main Street and add lighting that complements Downtown's historic architecture. The goal on Main Street, and around the Courthouse Square, should be to replace all highway-oriented lighting (cobras) with decorative, historic, pedestrian-scale lighting as quickly as funds allow.

2. Amenities

The following amenities should be added to Downtown – particularly the high pedestrian-traffic areas of Main Street and the Courthouse Square – to enhance the experience and pedestrian-orientation of Downtown.

- The small, white lights that were once in Downtown trees should be once again returned to street trees along Main Street and around the Courthouse Square.
- Benches should be placed along the length of Main Street and around the Courthouse Square, as has been done in the Columbia Street “model block” of the Downtown streetscape project.
- An adequate number of trash receptacles should be in place along Main and around the Courthouse Square, to ensure that Downtown is litter-free at all times.

3. Streetscape

As mentioned above, the City has implemented streetscape improvements on the Columbia Street “model block” in Downtown, greatly improving its appearance. And, the City plans to continue these streetscape improvements as funds allow. This is a very important initiative since it will upgrade Downtown’s appearance, ambience, and image, as well as the experience enjoyed by Downtown pedestrians. Therefore, the Downtown streetscape plan should be implemented at the earliest date – with the Main Street spine and Courthouse Square being the top priorities.

4. Banners

Decorative, non-stock banners should be placed on Main Street – particularly in the Retail, Arts, & Entertainment District (see below) in order to delineate this area, enliven its street scene, and beckon pedestrians to the district.

5. Public Art

Recently, the Office of Community Development and Redevelopment for the City of Lafayette issued a request to artists for the submittal of proposed public art projects. Since the response was not overwhelming, the following steps should be taken to solicit and place public art in Downtown – again, with emphasis on Main Street and the Courthouse Square.

- Downtown staff should contact, and possibly visit, other cities with strong Downtown public art programs to learn how these communities went about successfully soliciting and placing public art in their Downtowns.
- It would be ideal to place public art in Downtown that is created by local or regional artists. However, since local response to the City’s request for proposals was not strong, Downtown staff should reach out more broadly by contacting national organizations that represent public art creators and re-issuing its request for proposals.
- Consideration should be given to commissioning pieces of public art, in addition to soliciting proposals.

6. Buildings

Great strides have been made in Downtown Lafayette in the last five years, in terms of improved, enhanced, and upgraded building façades and business signs. This should be perpetuated by:

- Encouraging property owners to continue to make any façade improvements needed;
- Continuing to encourage improvements that respect the historic character of Downtown's buildings; and
- Allowing the current façade enhancement incentives program to be used for building interiors, as well as for façades and signs.

Traffic & Parking

The following steps should be taken to make Downtown traffic and parking as convenient as possible for Downtown's customers and clients.

1. One-Way Streets

The City should make every effort possible to revert Downtown's one-way streets to two-way traffic. Doing so will afford motorists easier access to Downtown businesses and will increase Downtown's pedestrian-friendliness and comfort – since returning two-way traffic to a Downtown is a “traffic calming” technique. To accomplish this, the City should retain the services of a traffic engineer who has experience in traffic calming and can, therefore, advise the City in this regard.

2. Angled Parking

The City should examine the feasibility of creating angled parking on side streets throughout Downtown – again, using the advice of the retained traffic engineer. This is important since angled parking will increase the number of on-street spaces that can be provided within Downtown and since angled parking is also a traffic calming measure.

3. Additional On-Street Parking

In an effort to create as many on-street parking spaces as possible, the City should examine all no-parking areas in Downtown – such as loading zones – to determine if any of these areas can be eliminated in order to create additional parking spaces.

4. Private Parking

As is the policy in Downtown, the developers of all new, infill buildings should be required to accommodate the parking needs of the building's users in structured, on-site parking garages.

Public Safety

The following steps should be taken to ensure that Downtown is, and is perceived as being, extremely safe.

1. Police Efforts

During the last five years, the City of Lafayette has added a police officer on foot to patrol Downtown. And, the City also operates bike patrols in Downtown. Despite these "Officer Friendly" patrols, there is still some concern among the public that police presence is not visible enough in Downtown.

It is understood that the Lafayette Police Department intends to hire a sergeant whose role would be to increase police outreach to and communication with the public. This is an excellent idea that should be supported by the community. It is hoped that this individual could spend a portion of their time focusing on Downtown to:

- Work with and address the concerns of Downtown business owners, employees, customers, and residents – as well as residents of the neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown; and
- Make the general public more aware of police efforts underway in Downtown and the actual safety of Downtown.

2. Social Services

As was said earlier, the concentration and proliferation of social service providers in Downtown was a concern raised in every session held to define this **Downtown Action Agenda Update**. In particular, Downtown business owners, employees, and residents – as well as residents of neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown – view this as a very large issue.

To address this issue, and the growing concern regarding this issue, it is suggested that the following actions be taken.

- The rule of “parity” should be applied to Downtown Lafayette in terms of the provision of social services. This means that Downtown should be expected to accept and house its “fair share” of social service agencies, but should not be expected to bear the weight of more than that. Therefore, it is time to “draw a line in the sand” and say “no” to the introduction of additional social service agencies – and the expansion of existing facilities – in and adjacent to Downtown.
- If possible, the City should revise its zoning ordinance so that social service providers cannot locate in – or expand in – Downtown as a matter of right. Instead, social service providers should be required to apply for a conditional use permit in order to locate in Downtown or to expand their facilities – in the case of social service providers currently located in Downtown. Requiring conditional use permits would allow the application of each new social service provider, and each proposed expansion of an existing facility, to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The leaders of the Downtown enhancement effort – in conjunction with neighborhood associations that represent residents of the areas adjacent to Downtown and in conjunction with community leaders – should open discussions with the existing social service providers located in Downtown. These discussions should be used to explain the importance of parity, as well as the economic impact that a concentration of social service agencies and clients has on a Downtown.

It must be recognized that the impact concentrated social service agencies and providers is having on Downtown Lafayette must be tackled by a coalition of interests that is larger and broader than just the Downtown Development Council and the City of Lafayette. Instead, a coalition of interests must be formed to address this issue. At a minimum, that coalition should include Downtown business owners, property owners, developers, and residents; the Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation, the Downtown Development Council, the City of Lafayette, and the Tippecanoe County government; the residents of neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown; Downtown and area churches; and the social service agencies themselves.

Business Development

The following actions should be taken to strengthen Downtown's business mix, offerings, and ability to make Downtown a destination that attracts additional numbers of customers.

1. Market-Orientation

In 2001, a Downtown market analysis was completed as part of the ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda 2002***. Currently, a market analysis is being completed for Lafayette's enterprise zone, which includes Downtown.

HyettPalma continues to believe that a Downtown's enhancement effort must be based on sound market research and analysis – and that the results of such analysis must serve as a cornerstone of the overall Downtown enhancement effort.

Therefore, it is hoped that the 2007 enterprise zone market analysis will:

- Determine the best economic-orientation for Downtown; and
- Recommend the range of business types most appropriate for Downtown – and especially for location along the Main Street spine.

2. Districts

Efforts should continue to create the three Downtown districts recommended in the ***Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda 2002***. The map identifying the three districts is presented on the next page.

In addition:

- During the next five-years, emphasis should be placed on clustering an appropriate mix of first-floor, impulse uses in the Retail, Arts & Entertainment District; and
- A goal should be established of connecting the Riverfront District with the Retail, Arts & Entertainment District to encourage pedestrian flow and a sharing of customers between these districts.

3. Business Retention

The following actions should be taken to assist and strengthen Downtown's current businesses so that they provide a unique experience, which enables them to attract larger numbers of customers, and therefore, become more profitable.

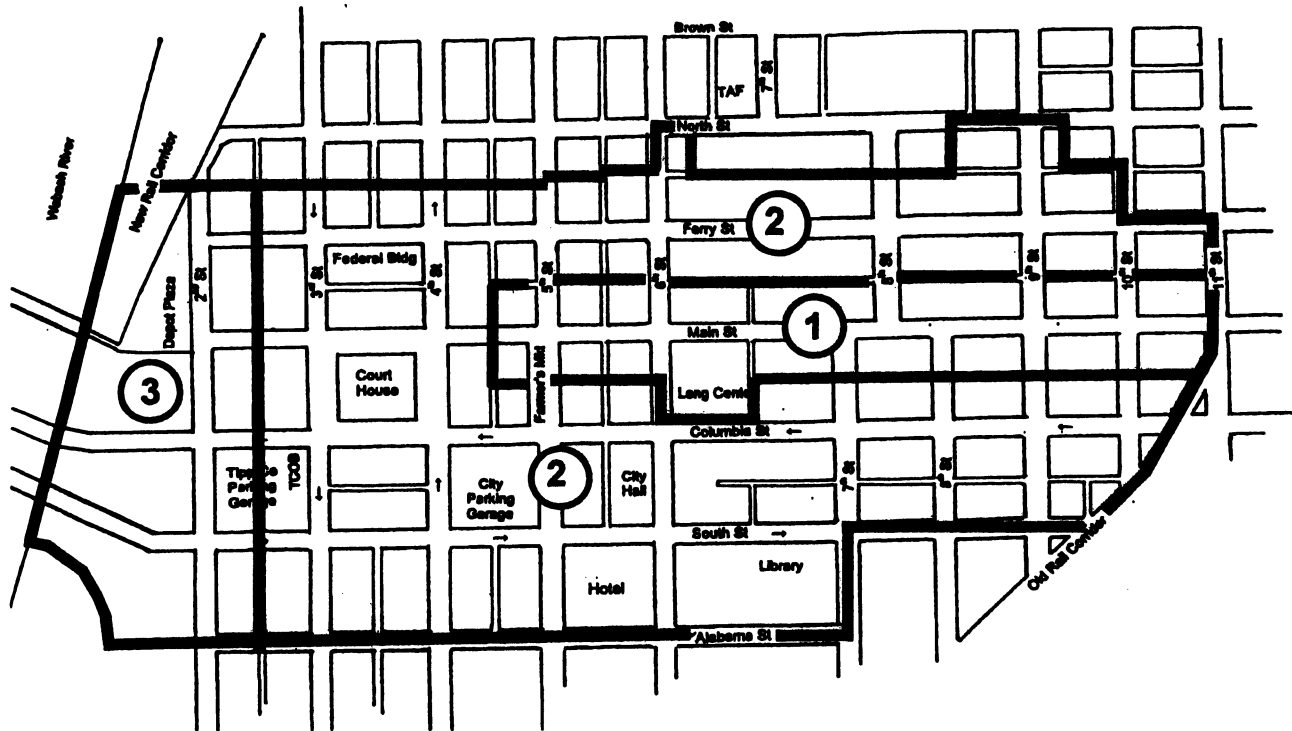
1. One-On-Ones

A concerted effort should continue to be made to meet and work with all of Downtown's existing business owners on a one-on-one basis – in their business establishments. These regular visits should be made by Downtown Development Council staff. It appears that Downtown's business owners sincerely appreciate this added "attention" from frequent staff visits.

During these staff/business owner visits, staff should discuss with business owners current initiatives being undertaken to further enhance Downtown, and determine if individual business owners have any specific needs or concerns which can be addressed in association with the overall Downtown enhancement effort.

It is often noted that one-on-one meetings between staff and business owners is one of the most beneficial and cost-effective forms of business retention that can be undertaken.

Downtown Lafayette Development Districts



Districts

- 1 = Retail, Arts & Entertainment District
- 2 = Office and Institutional District
- 3 = Riverfront District

2. Windows & Interiors

The Downtown Development Council should retain the services of a professional to work directly with Downtown business owners on store window displays and interior merchandising. This should be done either by hiring a qualified and experienced staff person or by contracting with a qualified, local individual. This service should not be provided by contracting with an out of town consultant, since a local presence will allow business owners to avail themselves of the service on a regular basis, form a bond with the service provider, and have the full attention of that person.

This valuable new incentive should be offered for a limited time – just as long as merchants are seeking the service and implementing the advice provided.

It should be noted that this service should be targeted to the Main Street corridor's first floor, impulse-oriented businesses.

3. Trolley

The trolley appears to be well used. And, from all reports, it appears to have had a significant economic impact on both Lafayette and West Lafayette. Therefore, all steps necessary should be taken to continue the funding and operation of the trolley.

4. Wayfinding

During the last five years, Lafayette, West Lafayette, and Purdue came together and jointly developed an attractive wayfinding sign system that is expected to be very effective in improving motorist access to all three. Therefore, the signs should be manufactured and erected as soon as possible.

5. Snow Removal

Fortunately, Lafayette does not experience many snowstorms in a given winter. Unfortunately, however, snow that does fall is piled in Downtown parking spaces and allowed to remain there long after the storm is over – posing an economic hindrance for Downtown businesses. To eliminate this hindrance, the City of Lafayette should:

- More quickly remove snow piles with current crews; or

- If that is not possible, give serious consideration to contracting with a private vendor to do so.

4. Business Recruitment

A business recruitment program should be initiated for Downtown Lafayette. That effort should:

- Be carried out by the staff of the Downtown Development Council;
- Entail aggressive prospecting and outreach, rather than the passive fielding of prospects;
- Be selective and targeted – both in terms of type of businesses and areas of Downtown; and
- Be based on the 2007 market analysis completed for the enterprise zone – in terms of types of businesses to seek.

- **Focus**

The focus of the business recruitment effort should be placed on seeking art, entertainment, food, and specialty retail businesses for first floor spaces along Main Street.

- **Prospecting Process**

New business prospects should be sought in person by Downtown Development Council staff, from throughout the states of Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. While appropriate businesses in any location throughout this area should be considered, specific attention should also be given to seeking business prospects in other university communities – such as Bloomington, Ann Arbor, East Lansing, etc.

While some “chain” businesses might be appropriate for Downtown now or in the future, initial emphasis should be placed on seeking small, independently owned businesses, and businesses which have already opened more than one establishment – either in a single community or multiple communities. And, desired business prospects should be encouraged to open a new business in Downtown

Lafayette, or relocate to Downtown Lafayette.

- **Incentives**

Consideration should be given to creating a pool of funds that can be used in flexible and creative ways to attract business prospects to Downtown. These funds should be used to recruit the types of businesses recommended in the 2007 market analysis – art, entertainment, food, and specialty retail – to first floor spaces on Main Street. Funds might be made available to assist prospects with items such as moving expenses, building improvements, marketing, etc. – based on the needs of each prospect.

Ideally, use of the money would be as unrestricted as possible in the early stages of the program. And, allocation of funds to prospects would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

5. *Wabash River Enhancement*

With the creation of the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation (WREC), a strategic plan for this portion of Downtown is about to be created. In doing so, it is suggested that:

- The Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation and the Downtown Development Council should both be included in the strategic planning process undertaken by WREC;
- Care should be taken to ensure that the resulting plan – and future riverfront enhancement – complements the remainder of Downtown, so that all portions of Downtown thrive and flourish; and
- Specialty retail businesses – of the types targeted for clustering in Downtown's Retail, Arts & Entertainment District – should not be allowed to locate along the river, with the exception of food establishments and water/recreation-related businesses (e.g., bike rental shop, kite shop, etc.).

Marketing

As was stated earlier, the need to more fully and comprehensively market Downtown was an issue raised repeatedly during the sessions held to define this ***Downtown Action Agenda Update 2007***. Therefore, the following steps should be taken to do so.

1. Campaign

An overall marketing campaign should be defined for Downtown. That campaign should be aimed primarily at marketing Downtown as a destination, where the public can enjoy a unique experience due to Downtown's quaint physical ambience and mix of one-of-a-kind impulse-oriented businesses.

The marketing campaign should be crafted by retaining a professional who has experience working with Downtowns. The marketing professional should be asked to:

- Define the key marketing messages most appropriate for Downtown – based on the 2007 enterprise zone market analysis and this ***Downtown Action Agenda Update 2007***;
- Recommend any changes that should be made to existing collateral and any new collateral that should be produced;
- Recommend the best placements for Downtown ads and collateral; and
- Review all web sites pertaining to Downtown and recommend needed changes to make them more usable by the buying public.

2. Collateral

Currently, a number of brochures have been created that pertain to Downtown. These have been designed and printed by a variety of groups (e.g., CVB, City of Lafayette, Uptown Merchants Association, Downtown Development Council). As a result, the brochures lack a consistent look – which means Downtown lacks a

recognizable, visual “brand.” This should be rectified using the recommendations of the marketing professional discussed earlier.

3. Web Sites

Similar to the brochures mentioned above, a variety of web sites exist that, in one way or another, pertain to Downtown (e.g., CVB, City government, Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation). However, for the most part, a separate Downtown icon or page does not exist on these sites. Instead, Downtown shops and restaurants are blended into general listings of businesses, making it difficult for the general public to find information that would compel them to make a trip to Downtown Lafayette.

This should be rectified by:

- Creating a Downtown page on all applicable sites;
- Using those pages to tout Downtown’s allure as a not-to-be-missed destination;
- Making sure that all sites that feature Downtown are linked; and
- Considering consolidating sites, where doing so would make it easier for users to find the information they desire.

Again, the marketing professional mentioned above should be asked to recommend specific ways to make web sites that related to Downtown more effective in attracting spenders and investors to Downtown.

4. Downtown Visitor Center

It must be recognized that, as Downtown’s cluster of impulse-oriented uses grows, and as Downtown is more effectively marketed, it will increasingly become more of a destination that attracts area residents and tourists alike. Given its physical ambience and setting, Downtown should be able to attract cultural heritage tourists in particular.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines cultural heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic and natural resources.”

In addition, the National Trust has stated that “studies have consistently shown that cultural heritage travelers stay longer and spend more money than other kinds of travelers . . . cultural heritage tourism improves the quality of life for residents as well as serving visitors.”

Therefore, since Downtown is a draw now and is expected to become an even more significant draw in the near future, serious consideration should be given to creating a satellite CVB office in Downtown that can serve as a visitor center. While having tourist information available at Downtown’s Swezey Commerce Center is a good first step, a more visible and accessible Downtown facility – and one that is open on weekends, at least during the summer – is needed. This could be accomplished with a small, on-sidewalk “kiosk” that is staffed by volunteers.

5. Story Placement

A continued and concerted effort should be made to work with all major print and electronic media throughout Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan to get positive stories placed about Downtown. This will be tremendously effective in solidifying Downtown’s image as offering a unique experience, turning Downtown into more of a destination, and enabling Downtown to attract spenders, residents, and investors.

6. Events

A number of highly successful events are now held in Downtown, including the Gallery Walks, which have been started within the last five years. Whenever possible, Downtown events should be staged in the Retail, Arts & Entertainment District, so that event-goers are exposed to the district’s businesses and so that the businesses have the opportunity to turn event-goers into future customers.

Management

Since completion of the *Lafayette Downtown Action Agenda 2002*, six local organizations have been consolidated to form the Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation. Under that Corporation's umbrella, the Downtown Development Council was formed – to specifically focus on Downtown's enhancement. In addition, the Uptown Merchants Association (UMA) was also formed within the last five years. And, neighborhood associations representing residents who live in the areas adjacent to Downtown have become stronger and more vocal forces over the last five years. These are all very positive occurrences that should be applauded and augmented through the following.

1. Downtown Development Council

The Downtown Development Council is currently comprised primarily of Downtown business and property owners and also includes representation from UMA and the Ellsworth-Romig neighborhood. Consideration should be given to broadening the Council's composition by possibly adding a representative from the Chamber of Commerce's Community Appearance Task Force, the Wabash Valley Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Tippecanoe Arts Federation.

2. Downtown Forums

To further foster inclusion in the Downtown enhancement effort, the Downtown Development Council should consider holding "Downtown Forums" 3 or 4 times a year. While these forums should be open to all who have an interest in Downtown's future, they should specifically include the Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation's board of directors, UMA, Friends of Downtown, the LUEA, City government officials, County government officials, arts organizations, Purdue, and adjacent neighborhood associations.

The purpose of the forums should be to have an open and inclusive discussion of Downtown accomplishments that have been realized between forums, key Downtown issues that will be addressed before the next forum, and the strategy that will be implemented to address those issues.

3. *Benchmarks*

The following benchmarks should be tracked by the Downtown Development Council on an annual basis as a way of measuring Downtown success:

- Total taxable value of property in Downtown;
- Number of new jobs created;
- Dollar amount of new private investment;
- Public improvements and their costs;
- List of business openings;
- List of business closings;
- Total number of businesses in Downtown;
- Total number of housing units;
- Occupied retail space (sq. ft.);
- Vacant retail space (sq. ft.);
- Occupied office space (sq. ft.);
- Vacant office space (sq. ft.);
- Occupied residential space (sq. ft.); and
- Vacant residential space (sq. ft.).

4. Annual report

In order to spread the word about progress being made in Downtown – and to garner additional supporters and investors – the Downtown Development Council should publish and widely distribute an annual report. Consideration should be given to working with the local newspaper to have each annual report printed as a newspaper supplement.

5. Funding

Serious consideration should be given to creating a business improvement district (BID) Downtown, also known as a special assessment. The reason for this is that BID funds are typically used to address the very issues that are currently of most importance to those in Downtown Lafayette – safety, cleanliness, and marketing.

If created, BID revenues should not be used to supplant funding sources that are now being used in Downtown (e.g., CDBG, TIF, Redevelopment Commission levy, City general funds, etc.) or services that are being provided to Downtown Lafayette. Instead, BID funds should be used to augment those funds and services so that a higher level of activity can be obtained in the areas of Downtown safety, cleanliness, and marketing.

In addition, the Lafayette-West Lafayette Convention & Visitors Bureau should be urged to allocate a higher level of bed tax funds for the marketing of Downtown – since a Downtown that is, and is promoted as being, a destination certainly does “put heads in beds,” meaning induces visitors to spend the night.

6. Adopt

HyettPalma strongly urges that this ***Downtown Action Agenda Update 2007*** be adopted by:

- The Lafayette Common Council, as the Downtown element of the City’s comprehensive plan;
- The Lafayette-West Lafayette Development Corporation, as the Downtown element of its strategic plan; and
- The Downtown Development Council, as its work program.